



## Wisconsin Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) Application

JUL 16 2012



ORIGINAL

July 16, 2012  
State of Wisconsin  
Department of Public Instruction



# **Wisconsin Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) Application**

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**Title 1 and School Support Team**

**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**

**Attn: Andrew Fisher**

**PO 7841**

**Madison, WI 53707-7841**

# 1. Application Narrative

## 1. ONSITE DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW

### 1a. PRIORITY SCHOOL DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW BY LTP

Cambridge Education LLC (CE) is a world leader in the field of school and district diagnostic reviews and has the capacity to collaboratively design and implement a range of reviews tailored to the specific needs of the client, the individual circumstances of each district and school, and the scale of the resources available to support the process. Our diagnostic review models continue to evolve based on the past 25 years of experience and expertise in the U.K. and more recently our approaches have been customized to meet the needs of individual states and districts in the U.S. Since 2002, we have reviewed over 4,500 schools in several hundred districts across more than 20 states, including Michigan, Indiana, Minnesota and Illinois. Our review work in Wisconsin has included work in charter schools. All CE strategic diagnostic reviews are based on quality standards which are research based including Total Quality Management, The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and Quality Management in Education research in the U.K. Details of a typical diagnostic review process are included below.

#### PHASE 1: FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

Senior CE staff members work with the client to develop a customized framework and associated criteria that concentrate on focused areas of concern. In view of the focus on Response to Intervention (RTI), we will ensure that there are specific criteria which address this key aspect; see Figure 1.1.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ✓ High quality Standards aligned and research-based instruction and behavioral support in general education (core curriculum)                    | ✓ Shared ownership of all students  |
| ✓ Universal screening of academics and behavior  | ✓ Tiered interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research-based interventions</li> <li>▪ Flexible grouping</li> </ul> |
| ✓ Data-based decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Progress monitoring</li> <li>▪ Benchmark and outcome assessment</li> </ul> | ✓ Parental Engagement   |
|  | ✓ Fidelity of Implementations   |

**Figure 1.1 RTI related criteria**

We will work collaboratively with the DPI to develop a detailed diagnostic review handbook which includes:



- Evaluation criteria that reflect the policies and language of the DPI
- A rating scale against which the evaluation criteria will be judged
- A scoring rubric and indicators for each of the evaluation criteria
- A short self evaluation form (SEF) to be distributed to schools before the review
- A review record book for capturing all the evidence gathered before and during the review
- A post-review report template and agreed writing style

In addition, we will develop a training program for all reviewers against the specific evaluation criteria to be used in the reviews; in this case, a first rate knowledge of the implementation of RTI will be essential.

### **PHASE 2: DATA ANALYSIS**

CE Diagnostic Review Specialists will undertake a detailed analysis of the performance data for all students in each school to identify the following:

1. Grade levels and subjects in which progress is best and those where most support is required.
2. Sub-groups of students measured by gender, ethnicity and social circumstance, that are performing well and sub-groups of students that need the most support.

The data analysis will be completed before the diagnostic review team visits the school and will be used to inform the review team as to where they should concentrate their efforts to discover which factors are successfully supporting effective learning or preventing effective learning from taking place.

### **PHASE 3: SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION**

Approximately three weeks prior to the diagnostic review, CE administrative staff will send the SEF to the school principal along with guidance that will support the school in the completion of an executive self evaluation. This will provide the school an opportunity to describe the context of the school and to explain why quality and standards are in their current state. The school leadership team will be encouraged to evaluate the extent to which the school provides a culture that effectively supports

student learning. School leaders will also be asked to identify the degree to which the culture for learning is impacted by each of the four following factors:

1. The quality of learning, teaching and assessment provided by academic and support staff
2. The quality of leadership and management
3. The extent to which the curriculum is aligned to Common Core State Standards
4. The extent to which the school works with parents and the local community to support learning

A recurring theme throughout the questions posed in the SEF would be the extent to which aspects of RTI are implemented consistently from classroom to classroom. The findings recorded in the SEF are entered in the diagnostic review record book and are compared and contrasted with the hypotheses developed following the data analysis.

#### **PHASE 4: THE SCHOOL DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW VISIT**

The review team (a CE Lead Reviewer and one CE Team Reviewer) will spend two days in school gathering data and gaining an understanding of the school's unique strengths and challenges, as well as the factors that may have caused or contributed to the persistently low student achievement. The team will seek to make recommendations for areas of potential growth and development as well as identify possible next steps for district leaders. The entire process will be subject to rigorous quality assurance by CE to ensure that the highest standards are being upheld and agreed audit protocols are being followed.

**The school site visit includes the following key review elements:**

##### **a) Meeting with Administrators**

Reviews begin with a meeting between the principal and the review team to discuss the pre-review analysis of student performance data and the content of the self evaluation form. This meeting also enables the principal to provide any additional information to ensure that the review team has a thorough understanding of the unique strengths and challenges that exist within the school. During the visit, further meetings will review key school policy documents.

##### **b) Observing learning and teaching**

A significant percentage of the time is spent observing how well students learn as a result of the teaching they receive. Principals identify a sample selection of classes to visit including rooms where learning is judged to be most effective, where learning is improved, and where learning requires improvement. The Lead Reviewer will also request to see classes identified by student performance data. The team member is accompanied on class visits by members of the administration. This helps to build local capacity and ensure that reports are based on factual evidence collected in partnership with the school. Discussions after observing lessons concentrate on answering two main questions: *Learning was best when?* and *Learning could have been even better if?*

#### c) Engaging the views of teachers, students, parents and the local community

The review team will meet with a small group of approximately eight students to assess their understanding of different subjects, attitudes towards school work, and view of life at school. The review team also speaks with students as they move around the school, visiting classes and gathering other data. Similar meetings will be scheduled with a group of parents, faculty, and community members.

#### Triangulating the evidence

Throughout the review, the team will be triangulating evidence gathered at each stage so that coherent judgments can be made and strengths and areas for improvement can be identified that will facilitate the development of a robust, but achievable action plan for improvement.

#### Triangulation



#### d) Giving Feedback

Throughout the visit, the Lead Reviewer meets with the school leader at least once a day to give feedback on the progress of the review, check on the school leader's views and feelings about the



process, and request any other areas of information necessary. At the end of the visit, the Lead Reviewer will provide verbal feedback to the school leaders.

### **1b. LTP REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS, ACTION PLANNING AND REPORTING**

#### **a) Making Recommendations**

The review team develops a list of the school's strengths and recommendations for future school action. Recommendations concentrate on the main factors that impact on the school learning environment.

1. The quality of learning, teaching, and the use of assessment data by academic and support staff, including intervention staff, to plan and enable subsequent learning opportunities.
2. The quality of leadership and management provided by the school administration team, including the amount of collaborative planning time available to discuss the progress of at-risk students.
3. The extent to which the curriculum is aligned to Common Core State Standards, modified so that it is accessible, relevant to the differing needs of the students, and is implemented in a way that engages students and motivates learning, particularly in reading and math.
4. The extent to which the school works with parents and the local community to engage them and to involve them constructively in the support of learning.

The recommendations made by CE review teams focus on how adults in the school can improve their efficiency and effectiveness so that the learning and progress of every student is improved.

#### **b) Action Planning**

While the leadership team in a Priority School may be fully aware of the scale of the challenges that face them and the need to raise standards, they often do not know how to get this process started. CE has a well-developed School Development and Improvement Planning (SDIP) process that helps them to prioritize actions, to start work planning what they are going to achieve in the short, medium, and long term. This five-step SDIP process is designed to follow on from an on-site diagnostic review.

**Step 1:** Supporting the school leadership team to develop a clear vision for the school in the short, medium, and long term (typically three years).

**Step 2:** Advising the leadership team on best practice for sharing and refining the vision with the school community in an effort to excite staff and to gain popular support.

**Step 3:** School working party establishes a provisional long list of high priority items that need to be done if the school is going to make the required improvements.

**Step 4:** A CE facilitator supports the working group to distill the long list of priority items down to no more than three “big ideas” that concentrate on what the school can do to raise academic and personal standards, and to better meet the learning needs of all of the students in the school.

**Step 5:** The CE facilitator models the development of one of these “big ideas” into a full action plan that identifies the person responsible for managing the plan, success criteria, resources required, start and finish dates, and interim benchmark points.

### **c) Report Writing**

A report is drafted for each school that clearly communicates strengths as well as recommendations focused on well established turnaround principles that will accelerate improvement.

Diagnostic Quality Review Programs completed by CE include the following:

**Grand Rapids Public Schools, MI** (March 2012): an initial sample of 12 diagnostic reviews, four of which were schools in receipt of SIG funding

**Benton Harbor Area Schools, MI** (fall 2009): diagnostic review of each of the 14 schools in the district. Since that time, we completed interim progress reviews for all of these schools.

**Minneapolis Public Schools, MN** (spring 2009): diagnostic review of all 70 public schools in Minneapolis. These schools received interim progress reviews in 2010 and full reviews again in 2011.

Examples of sample review criteria and scoring are provided in Appendix A: Attachment 1.

### **1c. DISTRICT QUALITY REVIEW (DQR)**

CE has worked in partnership with and in support of school districts since its earliest days in the U.S. and has a long and successful track record. For example, we completed 15 district reviews on behalf of the Connecticut State Department from September 2007 through June 2009. Our most recent district



review was Grand Rapids Area Schools in March 2012. In addition to general diagnostic reviews of district functionality, CE regularly reviews the effectiveness of specific district functions. We have completed reviews on the quality of Special Education support in both Minneapolis and Grand Rapids. Our DQR process is similar in many ways to the School Diagnostic Review Process and contains many identical practices including:

- The development of the review framework, key documents and tools (in conjunction with the client)
- Data Analysis and Self Evaluation
- An on-site diagnostic review of district effectiveness including the following components
  - The diagnostic review of a sample of schools (at least 4 schools)
  - Meetings with district officers
  - Focus group meetings with board members, community groups, and city officials
  - Open public meetings for all stakeholders including administrators, teachers, and parents
- Feedback to the district and the school board throughout and at the end of the process
- A written report detailing strengths and areas for improvement in all of the agreed domains

## **2. SCHOOL REFORM EXPERIENCE AND FRAMEWORK**

### **2A. PRIOR TURNAROUND EXPERIENCE AND SUCCESS**

Cambridge Education has extensive experience and has achieved measurable success in turning around and improving student achievement in low performing schools across all grade spans in a wide variety of settings. This work ranges from inner city to rural settings both in the U.S. and in the U.K., where our work as the strategic lead partner for the London Borough of Islington is now celebrating its twelfth anniversary.

Our role has included serving as:

- School and District Improvement partner to Title 1 schools and Tier 4 districts
- The Lead Turnaround Partner to SIG schools both transformation and turnaround schools

- Education Management Organization for a small rural elementary school in Virginia
- The provider of all education services within the London Borough of Islington

Table 2.1 is a snapshot of the range, type, and success of our turnaround work with schools and districts.

District	Timeline	Setting	Type	Demonstrable evidence		
Benton Harbor, MI	2011-2013	Urban	K-12	Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments show that in 2011 the average growth for BHAS was above both the state and national averages. For example K students began the year with 98% reading below grade level at the end of the year 55% were reading above grade level		
Brunswick County, VA	2011 - 2014	Rural	Elementary Middle	SOL reading scores: pass rate increased from 60% in 2010 to 72% in 2011		
New Haven, CT	2006 - ongoing	Urban	K-12	Achieved largest growth of any district in CT over the past four years		
				Year	% Goal & Above	% Proficient & Above
				2008	31.7%	46.5%
				2011	44.3%	60.7%
Prince Edward County, VA	2011 - 2014	Rural	High School	Academic Ranking moved +87 places from 290 out of 308 High schools in 2010 to 203 out of 322 high schools in 2011. Math rank order moved from 147 out of 154 schools (2010) to 65 out of 161 (2011)		
Petersburg, VA	2011 - 2014	Urban	Middle - Junior High	Percentage of students in the small learning community achieving 400+ on SOL increased from 23.4% (grade 7) in 2010 to 32.4% (grade 8) in 2011. SOL Writing Scores: 80.17% pass rate in 2012, improvement of 28+% from 2011.		
Santa Ana, CA	April 2012-2013	Urban	High School	Initial work has led to the school collaboratively developing a new vision and mission statement, and a collaborative approach to SDIP work.		
London Borough of Islington, U.K. (CE has been Lead partner since 2000)	2000 - 2013	Inner City	K-12	Indicator	2000	2011
				Overall attainment	22% below UK average	<3% below UK average
				5 or more passes at 16+	28%	75% (275% increase in A*-C passes)
				Advanced level grades A*-C at 18+	33%	75%
				Special measures / serious weakness	13 (out of 64)	0
				Schools judged good by OFSTED	15%	92% (national average 59%)



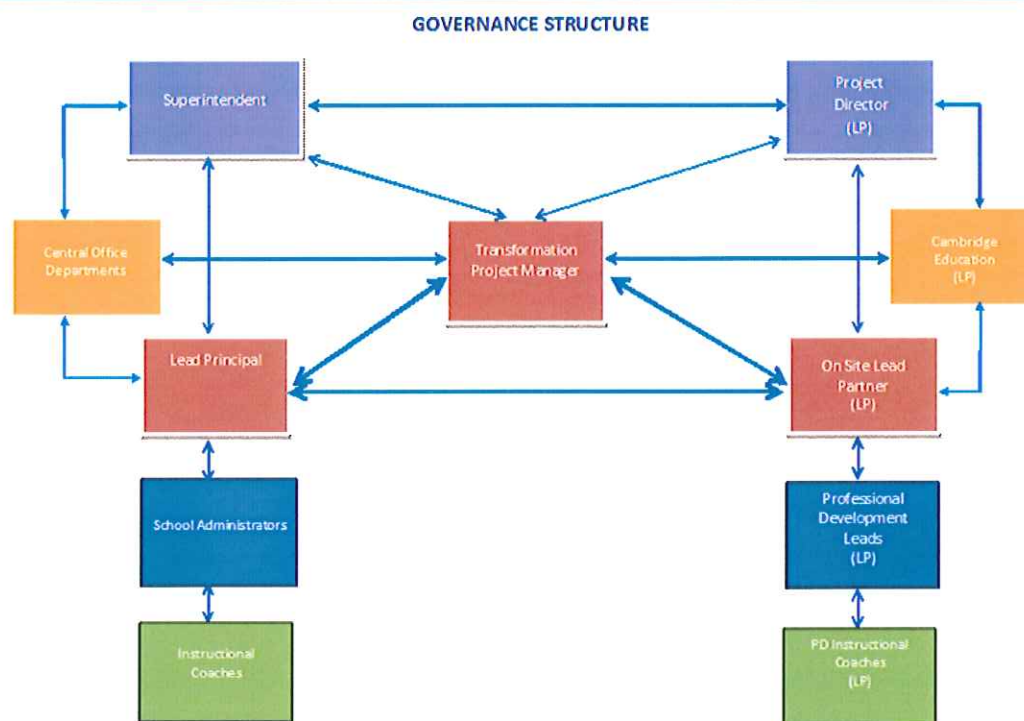
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## **2b. OUR FRAMEWORK FOR TURNING AROUND LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS**

Success in a turnaround environment involves recognizing that change is complex and that there is no single blueprint for improving schools, since every school is different and has varying capacity for change. It is our experience, however, that all schools want to improve. Therefore, our framework focuses on promoting transformational leadership. Our framework for school transformation is based on the belief that the development of strong working partnerships and actively engaging all stakeholders is fundamental to transforming schools and districts. Our starting point is to assist schools with identifying what they are doing well and what needs to be improved. We recognize the following dimensions are keys to successful transformational leadership: building the school vision; establishing the school's goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individual support; modeling best practices and important organizational goals; demonstrating high performance expectations; creating a productive school culture; and developing structures to foster participation in school decision making.

Transforming schools also requires the LTP to support districts and schools in setting ambitious targets based on reviewing and analyzing their data, including student and school-level analysis of past performance, and estimated future performance, and by challenging expectations where targets indicate low aspirations for rates of progress or outcomes to be achieved. It is also a question of enabling each school to make intelligent, informed decisions about what is likely to work best for them. Our LTP work indicates that there must be an unrelenting focus on the quality of teaching and learning. This entails transforming student-teacher relationships, promoting equity, providing opportunities for all students to be actively engaged in their own learning, and developing a culture of success. Teachers need to be the main agents of change and students need to be the main focus for change. Successful transformation also requires districts to review and revise its governance structures.





**Figure 2.1 Typical Alternative Governance Structure**

<p><b>1. District Transformation Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board member</li> <li>• District Superintendent</li> <li>• School Principal</li> <li>• LTP Project Director</li> <li>• LTP On-site Lead</li> <li>• Parent representatives</li> <li>• Student representatives</li> <li>• Community representatives</li> </ul> <p><b>2. School Leadership Team (SLT)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead Principal</li> <li>• Assistant Principal(s)</li> <li>• Lead Guidance counselor</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Schools Instructional Leadership Team (SILT)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLT</li> <li>• Instructional coaches</li> <li>• Department representatives</li> <li>• Grade level representatives</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Student Advisory Board</b> <i>A student body to focus on academics and transformation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Assistant Principal</li> <li>• 2 student representative from each grade level (nominated by staff)</li> </ul> <p><b>5. School Council</b> <i>A student body which functions as a social committee</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Principal(s)</li> <li>• Teacher(s)</li> <li>• 2 student representative from each grade level (elected by students)</li> </ul> <p><b>6 School Transformation Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLT</li> <li>• LTP On-site Lead</li> <li>• Teacher representatives</li> <li>• Student representatives</li> <li>• Parent representatives</li> <li>• Community representatives</li> </ul>
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**Figure 2.2 Typical dedicated teams established by Schools and Districts to support turnaround**

Within the structure outlined above, Cambridge Education's role as Lead Turnaround Partner will also

include supporting schools and districts to:

- Implement with fidelity the common core standards, with a particular focus on ELA and math

- Provide high quality job-embedded professional development for all staff, including administrators, teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Develop high quality student support services which prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In addition to providing schools with direct access to our own extensive professional development programs, we will advise districts and schools on the best offerings available from other providers.

## 2C. EVOLUTION OF LTP SERVICES OVER A FOUR-YEAR PERIOD

A major component of a successful LTP is building sustained capacity at a local level. Therefore, we envisage front-loading our services to provide intensive support, guidance, supervision and training during the critical first six months.

There is increasing recognition that in priority schools this first phase will involve the need to stabilize the school and a focus on promoting a positive climate for culture and learning. The next phase will involve the promoting human capital, family & community involvement and community resource development. Throughout this whole process there needs to be an unrelenting focus on Teaching and Learning. This approach is encapsulated in Chicago's Whole School Reform Model.

### The Whole School Reform Model

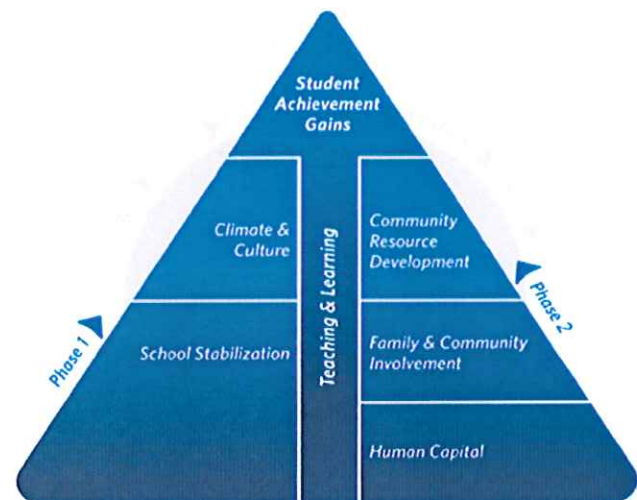


Figure 2.3 Chicago Public Schools

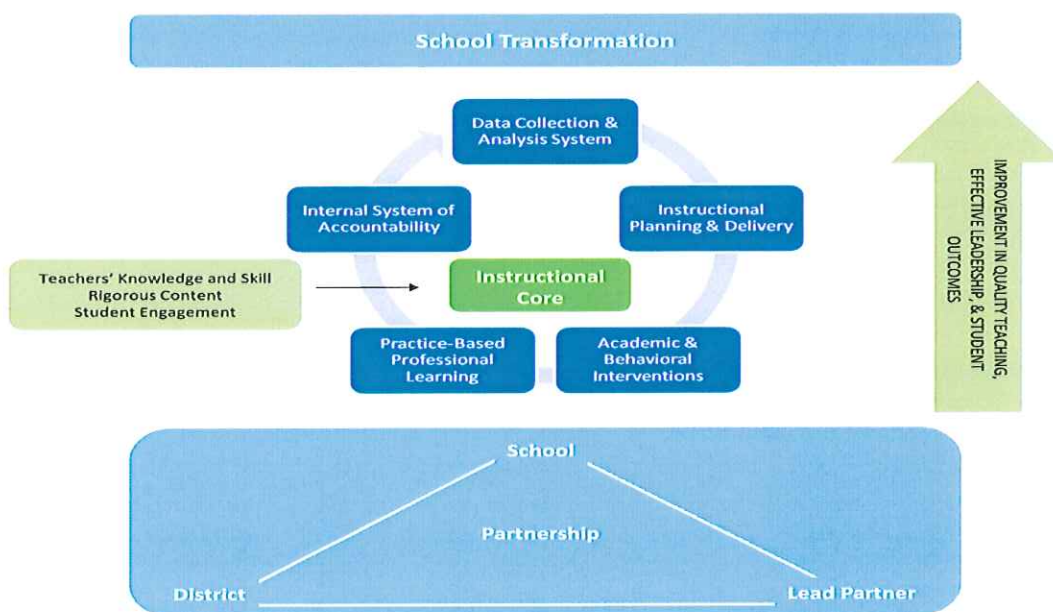
### Whole School Reform Model

Once this intense period of support is completed, we would gradually reduce our direct supervision to focus more on building capacity within the school and the local district over the remaining period of the contract. We envisage that in the final stages our role would be to provide ongoing quality assurance to

ensure a smooth transition of autonomy back to the school. The above changes would take place in consultation with the school and district following interim on-site assessments.

## 2d. THEORY OF ACTION THAT GUIDES AND INFORMS OUR PRACTICES

Our approach to leading school turnaround draws on research accrued over the past two decades by leading researchers in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K. and the U.S. This includes research undertaken by one or more of our strategic research partners. For example, in the U.S., we operate the Tripod Project through a partnership with Professor Ron Ferguson of Harvard University. Tripod is a key component of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funded Measures of Effective Teaching Project.



**Figure 2.4 Cambridge Education Theory of Action for School Transformation**

In implementing this theory of action, we incorporate the seven key turnaround principles identified by U.S.E.D. for Priority Schools, November 2001; see Figure 2.5 below.



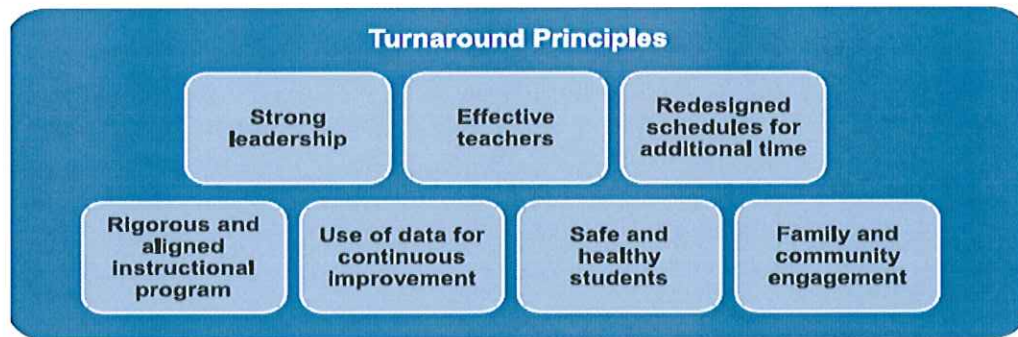


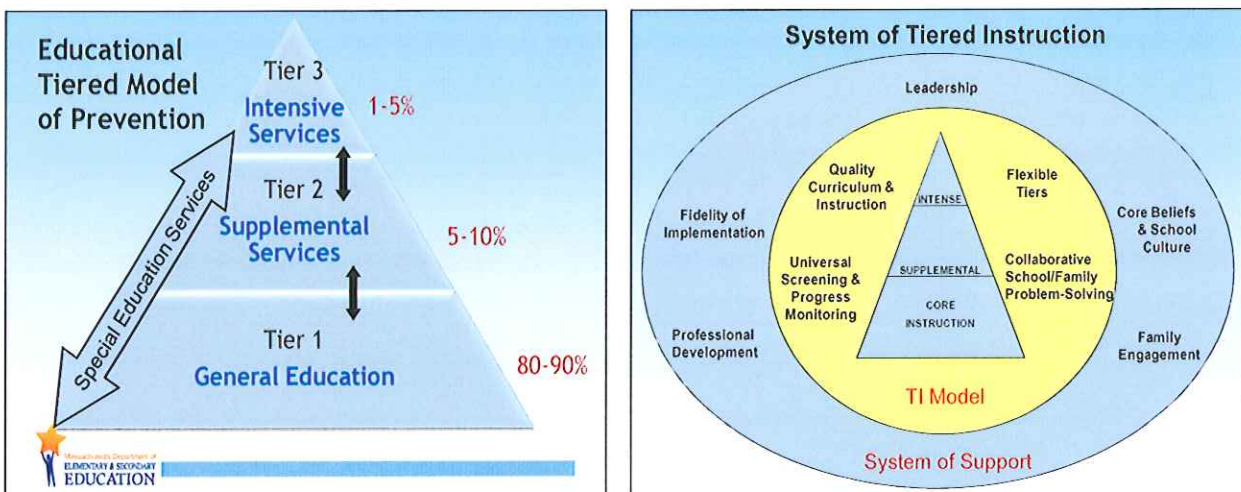
Figure 2.5 U.S.E.D. Turnaround Principles

## 2 e. OUR EXPERIENCE IN IMPLEMENTING THE REQUIRED TURNAROUND STRATEGIES

Cambridge Education has over 25 years experience and expertise around the world in providing high quality school and district improvement services which includes implementing all the required turnaround strategies identified by DPI in the Lead Turnaround RFP.

### 2e.1 RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

Our staff and consultants have extensive experience and expertise in both the design and implementation of RTI programs at state, district and school level. The examples below from Massachusetts are indicative of the systems we have developed and implemented with our clients.



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### **2e.2 EXTENDED LEARNING TIME**

As an LTP, we have successfully facilitated discussions with school and district administrators and local teacher union representatives to implement an extended the school day by up to an hour for all students. In a number of schools this additional time has been strategically used for targeted instruction, intervention, remediation, credit recovery, enrichment activities, and more AP and dual-enrollment classes. In addition, we have also been able to negotiate additional early student release every month with corresponding teacher collaboration and professional development activities planned. Another key element of the revised schedules is the introduction of collaborative planning time and job-embedded professional development into the school day. In other districts, such as Newark, NJ, the extended learning time also included extending the school year through the introduction of Saturday school.

### **2e.3 HIGHLY SKILLED EDUCATORS**

As an LTP, we actively support schools and districts to recruit, develop and retain highly skilled educators. Our work increasingly focuses on ensuring the implementation of a highly effective program for beginning and new educators. High quality professional development programs have been one of Cambridge Education's strengths since its founding. We have the experience and expertise to facilitate a wide range of programs including several which are focused on the development of distributed strategic leadership. We continually help schools and districts to totally rethink their professional development programs, while at the same time assisting school and district leaders in their efforts to provide job-embedded professional learning in the daily routines of school and district practices.

### **2e.4 HIGHLY SKILLED LEADERS**

The importance of the principal's leadership role is one of the clearest messages from the school transformation research.

- Most school variables, considered separately, have at most small effects on learning.
- Real pay off comes when individual variables combine to reach a critical mass.

- Creating the conditions under which that can occur is the job of the principal.
- Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among school-related factors that affect student learning in school.

Our programs for transformational administrators are rooted in practice based on high quality research from round the world, including the U.K. National College of School Leadership and most notably the work of the Wallace Foundation, who have published over 70 reports on the subject since 2000. In particular, we focus on supporting leaders to successfully implement the following six strategies which are widely recognized as essential components for successful transformational leadership: strengthen the school's culture; stimulate and reinforce cultural change through systemic processes; foster staff development; direct and frequent communication about cultural norms, values and beliefs; share power and responsibility with others; and use symbols to express cultural values.

#### **2e.5 POSITIVE AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Our consultants help Priority Schools to improve their school climate and culture by focusing on a number of key issues including promoting increased and regular attendance, decreasing truancy, implementing effective behavioral interventions, decreasing discipline issues, enhancing supports systems social including health and service for student, increasing expectations for academic, behavioral, and social achievement; all of which promote positive and safe learning environment.

#### **2e.6 FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

Cambridge Education has extensive experience and expertise in supporting districts and schools to develop and actively promote community and education partner relations. We encourage all schools to adopt the philosophy of '**a school in its community, the community in the school**'. Establishing a genuine partnership and culture of mutual respect between all stakeholders is central to the transformation of low-performing schools. We guide and support schools to implementing proven strategies to promote the active involvement of students, parents/guardians and the local community.



One key feature of this aspect of work is the implementation of a communication plan that regularly and effectively provides ongoing information and updates to parents, student, staff, and the community as well as engages stakeholders so they are involved and invested in the activities to transform Priority Schools into high performing schools in which student achievement is substantially raised.

### **3. APPROACH TO WORKING WITH SCHOOL DISTRICT AND STAFF**

#### **3a. OUR APPROACH TO NEGOTIATING WITH DISTRICT OFFICES TO ENSURE NEEDED AUTONOMY**

Cambridge believes that the development of a strong partnership working is fundamental to the success of any project. In all of our current turnaround work, the district retains the final authority for school operations and as LTP we have shared or full autonomy over items such as governance, budgeting, instructional design, staffing, professional development and student supports. In order to ensure the relevant autonomy, we agree with each district a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner (Appendix A: Attachment 2).

#### **3b. OUR APPROACH TO IMPROVING DISTRICT POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

As LTP, we work in partnership with district personnel to enhance and improve key district policies and practices. For example, one of our key areas of focus over the past four years has been to support districts to implement highly effective educator evaluation programs that empower effective teachers. In an increasing number of turnaround situations, at the districts' request, members of our staff have served as interim officers embedded within the central office to lead key developments. For example, in Benton Harbor, MI we have provided the Interim Chief Accountability Officer for the past year.

#### **3 c. OUR STRATEGY FOR BUILDING CAPACITY IN THE SCHOOL AND ULTIMATELY TURNING POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY BACK OVER TO THE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT**

In the U.K. we successfully returned power and responsibility for all 70 schools back to the London Borough of Islington, after five years, which was three years ahead of schedule. This provided us with an unprecedented experience and expertise which we have integrated into our work in the U.S. As a result, we have gained a unique reputation for providing advice, support and training to build capacity at

school, district, and state level. All of our programs include training our clients' staff, school administrators and others to gain experience and expertise by working alongside members of our experienced School Turnaround Team.

#### 4. APPROACH TO REQUIRED RESPONSIBILITIES

##### 4a. OUR ACTIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT DURING ITS FIRST SIX MONTHS WORKING WITH A PRIORITY SCHOOL

During the first six months, our On-site Lead will be on site at least 4 days per week (approximately 145 days in total). In addition, the On-site Lead will be supported by other members of our transformation team, including Instructional Coaches and Executive Coaches. This team will have the experience and expertise to address all the key areas identified within the RFP. The following table is intended as a high level overview of the successful approaches we have previously adopted with other clients.

i. Recruit and hire/rehire staff	Support the school/district to recruit, interview and hire new principals and rehire up to 50% of staff. (e.g. Cahokia, IL and Petersburg, VA)
ii. Establish a consistent, and intense relationship with each school and key district offices	LTP on site minimum of 4 days per week. Establish weekly meetings with superintendent and district (e.g. Benton Harbor, MI/ Prince Edward County, VA)
iii. Launch community engagement efforts	Establish Community Forum and engaged community in the diagnostic review (Santa Ana, CA)
iv. Work with facilities department to ensure physical improvements	Completed facilities audit and negotiated essential repairs during the summer recess (Benton Harbor, MI and Cahokia, IL)
v. Focus on culture and stabilization in building	Introduced a Code of Conduct, student advisement programs and trained security personnel (Brunswick, VA, Cahokia, IL)
vi. Monitor non-academic (leading) indicators	Agreed MOU and policies and procedures for capturing KPIs – every LTP program
vii. Enhance rigorous and aligned curriculum	Introduced Common Priorities Program as key part of every LTP program
viii. Other appropriate, visible, and meaningful improvement measures that are supported by research of successful school turnaround	Negotiated and implemented Teacher and Principal Evaluation Programs which focus on empowering effective educators. (Benton Harbor, MI/Sussex County, VA)



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## **5. INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**

### **5a. OUR CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAM:**

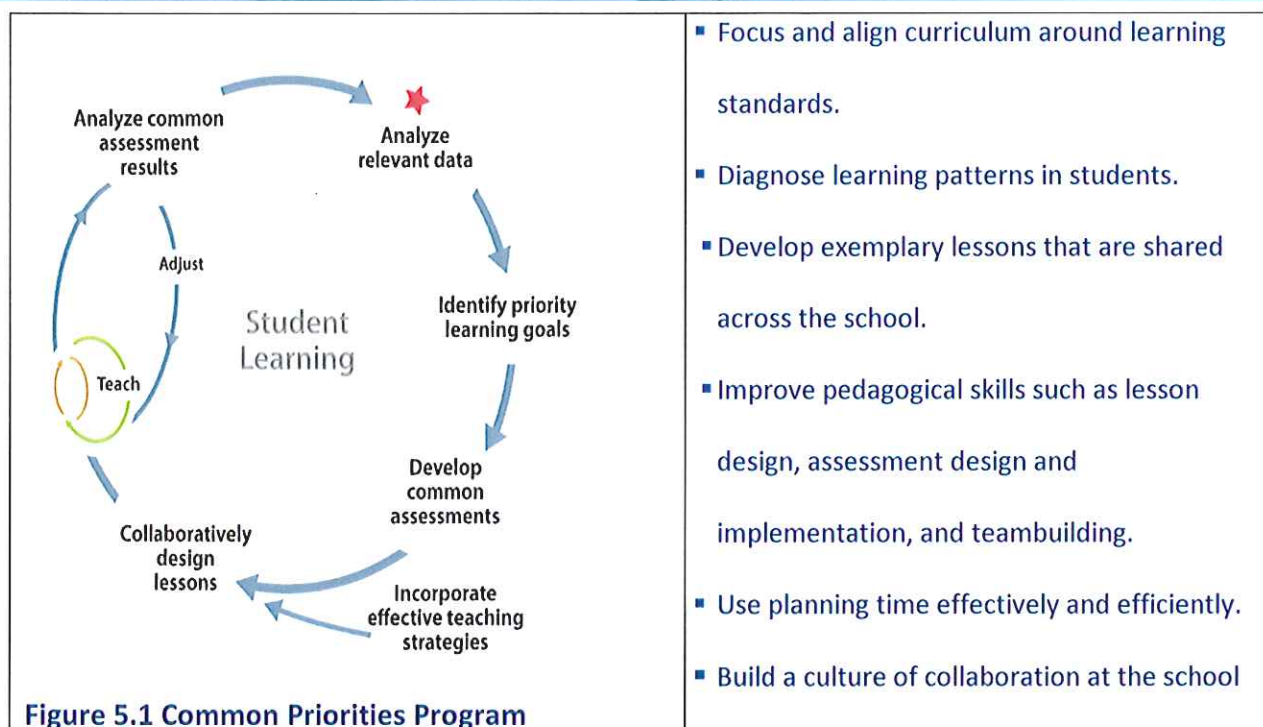
#### **5a I. CLEAR EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

The focus on student learning is a key element of our work as LTP. Through the effective use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) we ensure that priority school staff continually monitor and evaluate a wide range of data. In particular, we train and support teachers to undertake detailed analysis of individual student achievement at the end of each grading period. They are then provided with a range of strategies that enable them to use this information to set individual student learning goals and develop individual learning plans. Progress towards achieving these goals needs to be reviewed on a regular basis with students and shared with parents/guardians at the end of each grading period. We are committed to the Principle of Learning – A Foundation for Transforming K-12 Education developed by the Association for Career and Technical Education, Consortium for School Networking, National Council for the Social Studies, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and National Science Teachers Association (see Appendix A: Attachment 3). These principles recognize that being literate is at the heart of learning in every subject area, learning is a social act, learning about learning establishes a habit of inquiry important in life-long learning, assessing progress is part of learning, learning includes turning information into knowledge using multiple media, and learning occurs in a global context.

#### **5a II. ALIGNMENT WITH COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

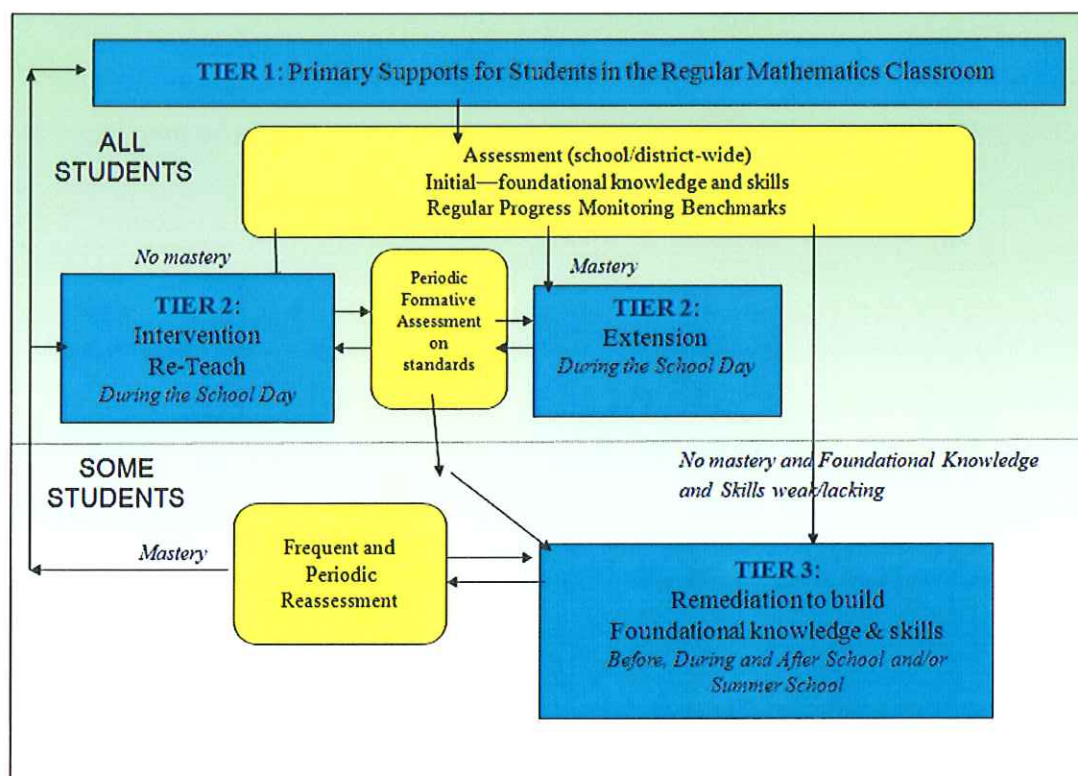
A key component of our work with PLCs centers on curriculum design activities to ensure alignment with the common core standards through the use of our Common Priorities Program ( see figure 5 .1)





### 5a: III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RTI SYSTEM

As indicated in sections 1a and 2e, our LTP team has extensive experience in this key area. The following are extracts from typical RTI systems we have designed and implemented.



*The above was adapted from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Math Support Specialists Network discussions, Building Your School Intervention Program, WestEd, San Francisco CA, 2007 Responsiveness to Intervention, National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD), 2006*

## Intervention System Requirements

- Clear Learning Expectations
- Pacing Guide
- Effective and Timely Assessment
- Data Analysis
- Remediation Intervention and Enrichment
  - Materials and Instruction
- Structures and Resources to Support all of the Above
  - Instructional time and space
  - Administrative, classroom and parental support
  - Assessment system
  - Program evaluation

Tool: Student Support Continuum for Instruction



### iv. How curriculum is designed across grade spans

As LTP one of our initial steps is to undertake a curriculum audit, which includes a review of the scope and sequence of the current curriculum. When placed alongside the outcomes of the diagnostic review, we are able to gain an overview of both the planned and delivered curriculum. Through the use of our Common Priorities Program, we then support the school leadership team to revise the curriculum to ensure that it is fully aligned with the Common Core standards, while at the same time implementing a program of Effective Classroom Observation to ensure that the planned program is implemented with fidelity. We also work with district office staff to ensure vertical alignment across K-12, including any grades which are outside the Priority School's remit.

### v. Ensuring equity and access for all students

One of the key elements of our LTP work is to ensure that all faculty members and district officers understand the concept that '**all students means all students**'. All our staff and consultants place an unrelenting focus on equity and access and we actively pursue this concept at every stage of the planning and implementation process. In some cases this has required us to provide intensive support

and training to staff with particular emphasis on inclusion and individualized learning. In other cases, it has involved continually chasing facilities staff to ensure accessibility to all parts of a school.

#### **5. b. OUR STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING AND TO CREATE EXTENDED LEARNING TIME**

As LTP, our starting point is to support schools in reviewing their existing schedule to ensure that it maximizes learning time in core academic and other subjects, enrichment activities, and teacher collaboration, plan, and professional development time. For example, we have been able to make recommendations for adjusting items such as transition/passing times and the length of breaks to gain up to extra 45 minutes extended learning time per day. As indicated in section 2e.2, we have also had extensive experience and success in negotiating extended days, up to an hour in a number of cases, as well as extending the school years by up to 10 days. Another key aspect in this area of our work has been to ensure that any after school programs are fully aligned and integrated with the school curriculum and learning approaches and open to all students.

#### **5. c. STUDENT TRANSITIONS**

Transitions to and from priority schools are frequently very poor. Schools and districts often do too little to ensure that students are prepared for the next step. As LTP, we work with the district and schools to develop and implement a transition program that ideally starts with entry into pre-K and seamlessly continues to college and/or employment. As identified by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, in their *Breaking Ranks* publication, well planned and effective advisory programs are one of the keys to successful transition. Preparation for college needs to commence in the elementary school; it is too important to be left until grade 10 or 11. Another key aspect of transition, also often done poorly, is transition from one grade level to another within the same school.

### **6. STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **6a. IMPLEMENTING A RIGOROUS, TRANSPARENT, AND EQUITABLE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS**

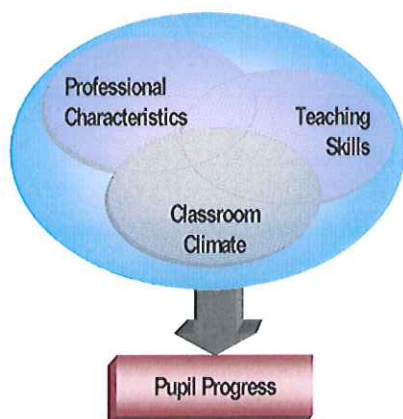
Cambridge Education is a world leader in educator evaluation, having developed and implemented a highly effective evaluation program across the whole of England from 2000 through to 2005. That



expertise has now been recognized in the U.S. For example, in 2010 **Hillsborough County, FL** selected CE as its lead partner in training and certifying over 900 school and district administrators and peer evaluators as part of their Empowering Effective Teachers program funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. In this case, the rubric used was the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching. In **Benton Harbor, MI and with our six LTP schools in Virginia** CE has collaboratively designed and implemented with the districts principal and teacher evaluation system aligned to their respective SEA requirements. We are also currently participating in online professional development also funded by the Gates Foundation. In all cases, inter-rater reliability and inter-rater agreement are inherent components of our training.

#### **6. b. ASSESSING AND DELIVERING TARGETED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In addition to the initial diagnostic review, our LTP team will implement an extensive program of classroom visits. We will also attend PLC meetings, grade level, department and curriculum planning meetings. Staff will also be invited to undertake a self-assessment of their own PD requirements. Collectively this will enable us to assess the level of training and PD required at each school. We also believe that the overwhelming majority of teachers, school leaders and district support staff are dedicated to doing a good job. For this reason, our programs are designed to be activity-based and, when possible, we adopt an 80:20 principle for training where 80% at least of the training is embedded in classroom practice.



Our professional development services are varied and wide. However, our prime focus is on training and development which will have the maximum impact on student progress and academic achievement, including professional characteristics of teachers, teaching skills and programs which support and develop effective classroom climate.

A detailed plan for group and individual support will be determined through SDIP and other planning conversations ensuing from the execution of SQR. The scope of work at this point will be tailored to meet the exact identified needs, and build capacity from existing strengths. This approach effectively support teacher improvement and is used across all of our school and district reform models. Appendix A: Attachment 3 provides an overview of Principles for Learning.

#### **6c. EVALUATING THE FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION, QUALITY, RELEVANCE, AND UTILITY OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The key to achieving fidelity of implementation is the regularity, quality and rigor of monitoring to ensure that what has been taught and trained is actually happening with fidelity in the classroom context, and taking decisive action if that is not the case. This process can only be achieved if principals, district staff, and the LTP work together to ensure that the implementation actually takes place. It is essential that all aspects of the process are monitored including curriculum planning, classroom delivery through the use of Effective Classroom Observation and student outcomes when groups of staff work together to compare, analyze and grade student work. CE is currently working to achieve these very results in Grand Rapids, MI where the input of high quality professional development over the past four years has not resulted in the required improvements in student achievement.

#### **6d. OUR PLAN TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EXISTING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**i. The evaluation of the principal's ability to act as an instructional leader** is achieved through by

providing through training in our Effective Classroom Observation Program including providing effective feedback to teachers, and by then regularly monitoring the quality of the implementation of their work, often through a process of dual observations to ensure the fidelity of practice.

**ii. The evaluation of the principal's ability and commitment to effectively distributing leadership and the building of capacity across school staff**

We will shadow the principals as they fulfill their day-to-day work and evaluate how well they promote and practice collaborative leadership. We will then provide targeted training and support to enable



them to further develop these key skills. During the year, we will also undertake a staff survey to gain the perception of all staff on this area of the principal's work.

**iii. Evaluating principal's ability to build capacity across the leadership team**

By shadowing the principals, especially as they chair leadership team meetings and hold on 1:1 meetings, we will be able to evaluate their ability to build the capacity of members of the leadership team. Our Executive Coaches will provide support and training in all the above areas and remedial action will then be taken to work on identified areas for improvement.

**6e. OUR PLANS FOR RECRUITING, HIRING, AND DEVELOPING**

The recruitment, hiring and development of school leaders is a key part of our role as an LTP which we have undertaken in five of our most recent transformation projects, including Cahokia, IL and across Virginia. Our support included establishing a job description, drafting the advertisement and planning the interview process, which included asking the candidates to make a short presentation on a 'whole school initiative which they have led'. One of our key roles as LTP is supporting and developing school leaders so that improvements can be sustained once the period of funding and support is over. For example, we are currently working with the human resources staff at Grand Rapids Public Schools to create a pipeline of leadership talent that will provide them with a steady supply of highly qualified and well prepared potential school leaders.

**6f. HOW WILL WORK WITH THE DISTRICT, THE TEACHERS' UNION, AND, AS APPLICABLE, OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

As previously indicated, working collaboratively with all stakeholders, including the teachers' union is a key part of the LTP role. We have an excellent track record in this area. For example, in Benton Harbor, we have been engaged in bargaining with both the principals' and teachers' unions as a series of very difficult and contentious decisions have been made as the district has right-sized the system in response to diminished numbers. The last round of school closures and downsizing was effectively informed by the developing structure of principal and teacher evaluation, which is now becoming established in the



district. In other districts, such as Brunswick, VA, we have worked with all key stakeholders to evaluate the ability of all faculty members to effectively participate in the school reform plan.

## 7. POSITIVE AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

### 7.1 SUPPORT THE ATTAINMENT OF A SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE CONDUCIVE

When working with Priority Schools, many of which have had low levels of academic achievement for a very long time, the primary aim of the CE team in the first instance is to develop a school culture that is positive and is based on an unwavering belief that all students can achieve success. This work, which begins with the envisioning process, described earlier, continues with developing a new, often more professional culture for learning within the school. To support this, CE has developed two staff training modules which have been applied with great success both in Benton Harbor, MI and with our six SIG schools in southern Virginia. Module One deals with **Professional Efficacy** while the second model, which addresses **Behavior Management**, concentrates on the consistent implementation of PBIS.

In Santa Ana, where we began working with two very large high schools in the spring of 2012, well after the start of the designated SIG period, we used a different strategy and jump started the process with a Collaborative Review. This process involved training and co-opting members of the school administration and staff on to an enlarged review team to give them an insight into what is really happening in the building. This has worked very successfully in both schools where we now have a significant proportion of staff and administration that see the need for urgent change having spent up to two days experiencing the quality of learning in the classrooms of their colleagues. **The Tripod Project** survey assessment program is supported and operated as a partnership between Cambridge Education and Dr. Ronald F. Ferguson, the project's founder. Dr. Ferguson is also the Director of the Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University. Tripod uses student and teacher surveys to collect data and analyze school climate, classroom conditions, and student engagement. CE routinely administers both the student and the teacher surveys at key points throughout the Priority School support process, using the data to inform the next steps in developing a positive environment for learning within the schools.

## 8. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

### 8 a. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS

To develop and maintain meaningful partnerships with parents it is essential to establish a culture and environment of trust, where stakeholders are valued, feel welcome, and more importantly have internalized the importance of their role within a lasting partnership for transformation. We ensure that we redefine the role of stakeholders, including parents, to one where we have internalized their perception of themselves within the school community as a partner, where school, students, and parents are empowered and see each other as valuable resources in this process of learning. We have seen that when parents work with the school in meaningful ways and can see and assess the impact of their work they feel empowered and they internalize a nourishing relationship with the school.

We must first understand our parents and assess their needs so that when we establish a system of high expectations for all (including parents) we ensure that all are given the necessary support. A big part of this is establishing a common language, giving stakeholders a voice, and understanding how the community itself can create partnership that support the emotional, social, and academic development of its students. To ensure that the reform process becomes a sustainable mechanism for growth within the school we structure everything that we do around capacity building and collaboration. Involving all stakeholders in the creation, implementation, and assessment of every program or mechanism created.

### 8b. ENGAGING PARENTS, GUARDIANS, AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Systems and strategies used by CE as LTP that are designed to engage parents, guardians, and family members to establish and support a culture of high expectations include the following:

**(i) A Community Quality Review (CQR)** is a process that creates a sustainable feedback mechanism for the school that becomes a very powerful tool for transformation. What makes the CQR unique is that it's a communication and assessment tool (parents to school) that creates a common language and understanding of what different domains of the schools should be like. A group of parents are involved in the creation of a rubric which facilitates conversations where parents



(ii) **Volunteering opportunities for parents** within the school, a process that involves school staff and students together to develop opportunities for parents to be involved, CE facilitating conversations and structures the creation of these opportunities so that students and staff can create ways in which parents can work with them in ways that he/she has an opportunity to develop himself/herself as a parent, can positively impact student development and ultimately all stakeholders can internalized a true collaboration between students, school, and parents.

#### **8c. EMPLOYING SYSTEM-WIDE STRATEGIES TO LISTEN AND COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS**

As part of the LTP process to ensure that a two way, consistent, coherent and open communication exists between all stakeholders we first analyze current systems, involving all stakeholders in the process of assessing the quality, quantity and most importantly the impact of current communication. After gathering enough information and conducting a needs assessment we develop systems within the structure of the school itself that study information flow/impact throughout school and the community. Strategically using events, assemblies, and orientations to deliver and establish a new culture of partnership. We also involve parents in the creation of the school development and improvement plan so that they understand their role in the transformation and development of the school. Parents are empowered to work with and for the school in its goal-setting process. We see parent advocacy and a multi-factorial and crucial piece to ensuring a system of growth and high expectations. This is why we strive not only to support common advocacy mechanisms such as a PTA but we strive to create a common language by involving parents in the SDIP and CQR process, this ensures two-way communication where their voice is valued. A key part of our parent engagement work is to incorporate systems in the school ensure that support systems are given to parents where they are most needed.

#### **8d. HOW OUR ORGANIZATION'S FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLANS ALIGN WITH THE RESEARCH OF DR. JOYCE EPSTEIN**

The work that CE does with parents is closely aligned to the six types of involvement developed by Dr. Joyce Epstein. We bring them together in a comprehensive program for parental involvement that includes: health and safety, parenting skills, child rearing; communication about programs, progress, and



support; volunteering; Involvement in learning activities at home; decision making and collaboration, working with community partners. In addition CE includes the following techniques and strategies recommended by Joyce Epstein: a sustainable “funding structure” for parent engagement; a well defined; goal oriented parent engagement program with clear defined goals and monitoring; communicating in languages that parents understand; and the importance of linked or “nested” programs, which has particular relevance in this proposal it because if we can work with the district we can make sure this happens. Her research clearly shows the importance of district-wide plan that is consistent and well structured to support different schools (State and District as leaders). Epstein’s research is also about the importance of “parent involvement” in schools which is why in our approach CE staff strive to create a shared language and set of beliefs that establish a collaborative partnership “shared” by all.

## **9. TURNAROUND PARTNER STAFFING AND QUALIFICATIONS**

### **9a. NUMBER OF FULL TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS THAT THE ORGANIZATION WILL PROVIDE TO SUPPORT THE SCHOOL**

During the project, the On-site Lead will also be supported by Instructional Coaches that will focus on professional development to improve learning in English language arts, mathematics, science and technology, as well as Executive Coaches that will support the school leadership team. During the first year of the project, the total on-site support provided will average to approximately 2 FTE. Over the duration of the project, the level of support will decline as we build local capacity.

### **9b. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ORGANIZATION PERSONNEL WHO WILL SUPPORT THE SCHOOL**

All of our On-site Leads have been school and/or district administrators with specific qualifications in school and district leadership. Many our consultants have also served as tutors/facilitators on nationally recognized school leadership programs. Our Instructional Coaches are all experienced classroom teachers with specialist subject and grade level knowledge. Our Executive Coaches are all experienced school and/or district administrators. The majority has worked in school turnaround for at least ten years (Appendix A: Attachment 4 includes sample CVs).